

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-10 and 12-17 are pending. Claims 3 and 11 are canceled. Claims 1, 2, 4-10 and 12-17 are amended. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the specification, thus no new matter has been added thereby. Applicant requests reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a):

Claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Amason (USPN 2,982,494). Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schroeder (USPN 5,127,601). Claims 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeder in view of Andrivet et al. (USPN 6,327,132). Claims 5 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeder in view of Andrivet et al. and further in view of Prandy (USPN 5,225,265). Claims 6 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeder in view of Sankrithi et al. (USPN 6,666,406). Claims 8 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeder in view of Paine (USPN 4,609,904). Applicant overcomes the rejection as follows.

Claim 1 sets forth, *inter alia*, “a plurality of electrically conductive coupling mechanisms which join the plurality of composite panels to each other at their respective edges” and further the plurality of electrically conductive coupling mechanisms “having respective adjacent ends that are electrically coupled to each other to form a continuous, electrically conductive grid disposed on the exterior surface of the aircraft body.” Similarly Claim 9, sets forth, *inter alia*, “coupling the plurality of composite panels to each other at the adjacent edges of the composite panels using electrically conductive coupling mechanisms” and “electrically coupling respective adjacent ends of the conductive coupling mechanisms to each other to form a continuous, electrically

conductive grid on the exterior surface of the aircraft body.” Applicant could find no disclosure in Amason or Schroeder that teaches or suggests Applicant’s invention.

Neither Amason or Schroeder disclose coupling mechanisms which join the plurality of composite panels to each other at their respective edges” Accordingly, Claim 1 and 9 are not anticipated by Amason and Schroeder.

The Examiner has cited Andrivet et al. for the proposition that “composite aircraft have many panels of composite that must be joined electrically to one another.” Further, the Examiner states that the panels disclosed in Andrivet et al. “have electrical shielding layers 5 that are electrically interconnected by bolts and the electrically conducting plate.”

However, Andrivet fails to cure the deficiencies of Amason and Schroeder as it fails to disclose “coupling mechanisms having respective adjacent ends that are electrically coupled to each other to form a continuous, electrically conductive grid disposed on the exterior surface of the aircraft body” or “electrically coupling respective adjacent ends of the conductive coupling mechanisms to each other to form a continuous, electrically conductive grid on the exterior surface of the aircraft body.”

Since Andrivet et al. fail to teach or suggest Applicant’s invention either alone or in combination with Schroeder, Claims 1 and 9 are allowable over the references.

Applicant has reviewed the Prandy, Sankrithi et al. and Paine references and could find no disclosure which cures the deficiencies of Schroeder to arrive at Applicant’s invention.

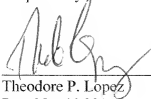
Accordingly, Claims 1 and 9 are allowable over the cited references.

Claims 2 and 4-8 depend from Claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons provided above with respect to Claim 1. Claims 10 and 12-17 depend from Claim 9 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons provided above with respect to Claim 9. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 2, 4-8, 10 and 12-17.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe Claims 1, 2, 4-10 and 12-17 are allowable, and a notice of allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at 949-955-1920.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Theodore P. Lopez', is written over a horizontal line.

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